

City of Socorro

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Elfego Baca Heritage Park, Socorro Plaza and School of Mines Road Project Nears Completion

The Socorro Plaza/School of Mines Road Project will soon be finished, and Socorroans and tourists alike will be delighted with the results. The project was launched more than two years ago, financed by a state appropriation.

“When you look at it you won’t see everything that went into it. It’s pretty complicated,” says City Clerk Pat Salome. “You’ll see gravel, flowers and trees, but the story behind it is pretty interesting.”

The most recent chapter of “the story behind it” involves the landscaping phase. When the bids came in, they were more than twice what the City had to spend. That’s when Socorro City Water Department employee Lloyd Martinez stepped up to the plate. He was already looking at the requirements to irrigate the new landscaping and figured city employees could complete the work within the budget limits. His work for the City as head of the City Water Department already required him to have his contractor’s and his utility contractor’s licenses. He applied for and received his landscaping license and went to work.

Plans had to be coordinated with the phone and utility companies to put lines underground. Each resident along the street had to be contacted to confirm property lines and address individual concerns. But the most time-consuming part of

the project, Martinez says, was getting quotes for everything from drip irrigation parts to shrubs and trees to street lights.

His water department work continued as well. Department employees have rallied and taken on more responsibilities with on-going projects such as the new sewer line under Cuba Road, the pump to relieve flooding at Mariposa and fencing around water tanks.



Rick “Chick” Griego and Lloyd Martinez examine the landscaping blueprints for Elfego Baca heritage Park.

Martinez jokes that his golf game has suffered, but he’s proud of what has been accomplished.

There’s more...

The landscaping project is more than plants and irrigation. Just ask local artist Liz Alvarez. For four years, she has collected tiles children created at the annual Socorro Arts Party. She has over 500 of them and has dreamed of displaying them in Socorro.

“From the very beginning I wanted to have a piece of the children’s art installed somewhere in Socorro,” says Alvarez. She had been toying with the idea of creating a bench from their work. The City introduced her to the Project architect Laurie Roddick-Aguilar, and together they came up with a plan.

Eight monuments to Socorro history will grace the Elfego Baca Heritage Park in front of City Hall. Each will consist of a main plaque depicting some aspect of Socorro history, with 24 children's tiles decorating the monument base. More children's tiles will decorate two S-shaped benches, one at Elfego Baca, and one at the intersection of School of Mines Road and Mount Carmel, where the ninth monument stands.

Monument themes include: Elfego Baca, the Juan Jose Baca House, the Battle of Val Verde, Garcia Opera House, the Old Socorro Plaza, historic School of Mines Road, San Miguel Mission, Juan Nepomuceno Garcia House and a list of Socorro Mayors.

New lighting from the Plaza to San Miguel Mission and along School of Mines Road to the campus of New Mexico Tech will complete the project.



Liz Alvarez looks over tiles for the history exhibits.

21st Annual Festival of the Cranes

Tourists will be flocking to Socorro November 18 through 23 for the 21st Annual Festival of the Cranes. Workshops, lectures, tours and hands-on activities for serious birders to beginning birders to non-birding family members will be offered at the Bosque del Apache National Wildlife Refuge, Macey Center and points in between. The City supports the Festival through Lodgers Tax and in-kind donations as well as sponsoring special events in Socorro on Friday. For more information, pick up a brochure at the Socorro Heritage and Visitors Center or the Chamber of Commerce.

Holiday Parade and Posole Cookoff

"Skies over Socorro" is the theme for this year's holiday light parade to be held Saturday night, November 29. Float applications may be picked up at the Socorro Heritage and Visitors Center and must be returned to the Center by Wednesday, November 26. Floats will be judged in the following categories:

- Best Presentation of Theme
- Best Illuminated (use of light)
- People's Choice

The parade will assemble at Sedillo Park at 5:00, leaving at 6:00 to end at the Plaza.

The Chamber of Commerce will sponsor a posole cookoff on the Plaza all day November 29. Following the parade, you can warm up at the Social on the Plaza with parade awards, music, posole and.....Santa!

Employee Anniversaries

Mike Jojola	25 years
Lawrence Montano	10 years
Mario Amaro	10 years
Felix Saavedra	5 years
Candice Smith	5 years
Raymond Calkins	5 years

City Council

Mary Ann Chavez-Lopez	Gordy Hicks
Toby Jaramillo	Donald Monette
Michael Olguin, Jr.	Ernest Pargas, Jr.
Peter Romero	Chuck Zimmerly
Ravi Bhasker, Mayor	
Pat Salome, City Clerk	